



## THE HIGHER PATH.

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FOR YOUNG CONVERTS.

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**A**N ancient writer has wisely said that "there have been from the beginning two orders of Christians." The one live an innocent life, conforming in all things not obviously sinful to the fashions of the world, doing many good works, abstaining from sins, and attending the ordinances of God. They endeavor to have a conscience void of offense in their behavior, but they do not aim at special excellence. They aspire only to the average spiritual attainments.

The other class of Christians not only ab-

stain from every form of vice, but they are zealous of every kind of good work. They scrupulously attend all the ordinances of God. They use all diligence to attain the whole mind that was in Christ, and to walk in the very footsteps of their beloved Master. They unhesitatingly trample on every pleasure which disqualifies them for the highest usefulness. They deny themselves not only indulgences expressly forbidden, but also those which by experience they have found to diminish their enjoyment of God. They find and cheerfully bear a daily cross. At the dawn of day they cry, "Glorify thyself in me this day, O blessed Jesus! Get unto thyself the utmost glory from my words and deeds this day." It is more than their meat and drink to do their heavenly Father's will. They are not quietists, ever lingering in the closet, delighting in the ecstasies of enraptured devotion. They enter into the closet, but they come forth into this wicked world as Moses came down the Mount of God, with faces radiant with the divine glory. They visit the groveling and sensual,

and prove by lips and life the divinity of the Gospel. Men tremble before them as Milton represents Satan, when, from the walls of Eden, he first saw the sinless pair, as trembling "to behold how awful goodness is." Next to the Living Head, the Lord Jesus, these earnest, consecrated believers preserve and perpetuate the Church from age to age. She triumphs because of their unswerving faith and heroic lives. The secret of their strength is in the fact that, by the guidance of the Spirit, they walked in the King's highway up to the summit of Christian purity. They strove, they agonized, to plant their feet on that sunlit height. They left the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and went on to perfection. They knelt down by the side of St. Paul and joined in that wonderful prayer in the third chapter of Ephesians—the higher-life prayer of the New Testament—till they "knew the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and they were "filled with all the fullness of God." Says Mr. Wesley, whose spiritual wisdom the Christian world is just beginning to appreciate:

“From long experience and observation I am inclined to think that whoever finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, whoever is justified, *has the choice of walking in the higher or the lower path.* I believe the Holy Spirit at that time sets before him the ‘more excellent way,’ and incites him to walk therein; to choose the narrowest path of the narrow way; to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness, after the entire image of God. But if he does not accept his offer, *he insensibly declines into the lower order of Christians.* He still goes on in what may be called a good way, serving God in his degree, and finds mercy in the close of life through the blood of the covenant.” The last assertion of Mr. Wesley respecting the salvation of this class is, as he always taught, that they are persevering believers. But this lower path lies so near to the broad way that many are insensibly lured into it, and they go down to destruction with the thoughtless throng who enter in at the wide gate. Would you, my young Christian friend, place the best possible safeguard against such a spiritual catas-

rophe? Take the higher path. Consecrate all to Christ. Seek full salvation through his "blood, which cleanses from all sin." This is the divinely-invented safeguard against apostasy from Christ;

Jesus, thine *all* victorious love,  
Shed in my heart abroad;  
Then shall my feet no longer rove,  
Rooted and fixed in God.

These two paths lie before your feet, young convert. Choose you that one in which you will walk, the higher or the lower, the safer or the more perilous. Let one who has tried both give you the benefit of his experience. The lower path seems to be more easy, but, in reality, it is far more difficult. The sultry heat produces languor, and the noxious vapors of the low lands induce stupor, making it exceedingly difficult to keep walking even though the road is level. The beautiful bowers of ease tempt the drowsy traveler to lie down and sleep. But to sleep is to lose heaven, as, alas! multitudes of the lower-path travelers have done. Let their whitened bones scattered along

this path be a warning to you to seek the upland way. It appears to be steep and rough; but the few in every age who have tried it all agree in testifying that the atmosphere is so bracing and exhilarating that they seemed to be lifted up the mountain's side by an invisible hand. Such a flood of life courses through their veins, such electric vigor shoots through their limbs, that they are not inclined to turn aside to the pleasure arbors which Satan has unwisely placed here and there near this upward path. The way itself is the highest pleasure on earth. The pilgrims "run and are not weary." The Hebrew psalmist explains this mystery, "I will *run* the way of thy commandments *when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*" Along the higher path the joy of the Holy Ghost flows, a river cool and clear, deep and wide, laving its verdant banks. Along the lower path it is a brooklet more than half the year dried up by the torrid heat. Through the clear, Italian atmosphere of the highlands the celestial city is ever in view to the eye of faith; but clouds frequently settle down

upon the lowland pilgrims, bringing perplexing doubts respecting the issue of their journey. The upward path leads to "an abundant entrance," while the sojourners in the other path are haunted by distressing fears lest they shall come short of being even "scarcely saved." Christian reader, a fellow-pilgrim to the New Jerusalem has had this experience in these two paths. His testimony could be corroborated by many thousand witnesses, the brightest lights in Church history. Have such names as St. Paul, Madam Guyon, John Fletcher, William Bramwell, Hester Ann Rogers, James Brainerd Taylor, and many others, no weight with you in deciding the question, Which path?

Having chosen the higher path, do not be discouraged by the obstacles in the way of entering it. You are not to remove them by your own strength. You have an almighty and complete Saviour, "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him." With a submissive will and trusting soul pray "that you may know the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Be in

earnest. Let your soul become a furnace of desire, burning with sevenfold intensity. Remember that the beatitude of fullness is pronounced upon those "who hunger and thirst after righteousness." Pray and faint not. Take into your closet Charles Wesley's great poem of a struggling and victorious soul, "Wrestling Jacob," and pray its words till the intensity of the expressions kindles your soul into a glow of unquenchable ardor and unconquerable persistence. Let your faith grasp some one of Christ's many precious promises and use it as a key; then will the iron gate across the King's highway, of its own accord, swing back upon its hinges, and the path never trod by the lion's whelps shall lie before you.

Dropping all figures, let me say to you plainly that you must enter the higher Christian life by simple faith in Jesus Christ as your complete Saviour. As you received him, so walk in him. As you received regeneration by faith, you are by faith only to receive "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." As repentance was requisite to justifying faith,



so consecration is preparatory to sanctifying faith. You could not believe for pardon without giving up your sins. You cannot now believe for purity without giving up yourself. You may say, "I did this when I was converted." You then, like a conquered rebel, threw down your weapons and surrendered. Now that you have been pardoned and made a citizen, Christ, the King, gives you the privilege of showing your loyalty by pouring all your substance into his treasury as a free-will offering, and of volunteering, soul and body, in his conquering army.

The difference between the two acts of consecration is the difference between a foe surrendering with reluctance and a patriot volunteering with gladness. The subsequent service is marked by a feeling of servility in the one case and of joyful freedom in the other. The full measure of Christ's love makes free indeed. Service is no longer a drudgery but a delight. The motive to obedience is no longer fear, but love; not the dread of the law, but love to the Lawgiver.

These are the two ways of Christian living — the Lower and the Higher Path.

Every consideration of greater usefulness, greater happiness, greater security, and, above all, GREATER GLORY TO THE BLESSED LORD JESUS, should constrain you to seek the Higher Path immediately.

“If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at his word,  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of the Lord.”

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### WRESTLING JACOB.

COME, O thou Traveler unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with thee:  
With thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.

I need not tell thee who I am;  
My sin and misery declare;  
Thyself hast called me by my name,  
Look on thy hands, and read it there:  
But who, I ask thee, who art thou?  
Tell me thy name, and tell me now

In vain thou strugglest to get free;  
I never will unloose my hold:  
Art thou the Man that died for me?  
The secret of thy love unfold:  
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,  
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

Wilt thou not yet to me reveal  
Thy new, unutterable name?  
Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell;  
To know it now resolved I am:  
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,  
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

What though my shrinking flesh complain,  
And murmur to contend so long?  
I rise superior to my pain:  
When I am weak, then I am strong!  
And when my all of strength shall fail,  
I shall with the God-man prevail.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,  
But confident in self-despair;  
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak;  
Be conquered by my instant prayer:  
Speak, or thou never hence shalt move,  
And tell me if thy name be Love.

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! thou diedst for me;  
I hear thy whisper in my heart;  
The morning breaks, the shadows flee;  
Pure, universal Love thou art:  
To me, to all, thy bowels move,—  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

My prayer hath power with God; the grace  
Unspeaking I now receive;  
Through faith I see thee face to face,  
I see thee face to face, and live!  
In vain I have not wept and strove;  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

I know thee, Saviour, who thou art,—  
Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend:  
Nor wilt thou with the night depart,  
But stay and love me to the end:  
Thy mercies never shall remove;  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

The Sun of Righteousness on me  
Hath risen with healing in his wings:  
Withered my nature's strength, from thee  
My soul its life and succor brings:  
My help is all laid up above;  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

Contented now, upon my thigh  
I halt, till life's short journey end;  
All helplessness, all weakness, I  
On thee alone for strength depend:  
Nor have I power from thee to move;  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

Lame as I am, I take the prey;  
Hell, earth, and sin, with ease o'ercome  
I leap for joy, pursue my way,  
And, as a bounding hart, fly home,  
Through all eternity to prove  
Thy nature and thy name is Love